

VZCZCXRO2758
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHSL #0306/01 142122Z
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 221222Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0951
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0121

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRATISLAVA 000306

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [YI](#) [KO](#) [RU](#) [UNSC](#) [PHUM](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER PM DZURINDA ON KOSOVO, RUSSIA, SLOVAK
POLITICS

REF: BRATISLAVA 270

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
)

¶1. (C) Summary. Former PM Mikulas Dzurinda discussed Russia, Kosovo and domestic politics in an informal meeting with Ambassador on May 19. Dzurinda said he will continue to criticize PM Fico for his Russophile leanings, but acknowledged the Slovak public is not bothered. He decisively dismissed rumors he might eventually bring his SDKU party into the governing coalition. Dzurinda believes Serbia must be given time to accept a plan for Kosovo, lest it be drawn closer to Russia and away from the EU. End summary.

¶2. (C) Dzurinda intends to stay engaged on Kosovo although he did not/not say he planned any assault on the Fico government's current stance in the UNSC. Dzurinda argued the Ahtisaari plan will drive Serbia closer to the Russians, who don't want Serbia in NATO. Serbia must be invited into EU structures, and convinced to "be kind" to Kosovo. The inevitable division, based on mutual interest, can come in the future. Dzurinda likened such a pattern to the break-up of Czechoslovakia. Ambassador did not discuss the current UNSC deliberations lest Dzurinda get ideas for an intervention, but did vigorously repeat arguments in favor of the Kosovo final settlement envisioned by Ahtisaari.

¶3. (C) Dzurinda characterized Fico's tendency to act as a spokesman for the Russians as "a little bit dangerous." Dzurinda reminded the Ambassador that he has spoken strongly and publicly against such behavior, most recently in a televised debate with HZDS Chairman Vladimir Meciar. Dzurinda said the USG should be more aggressive in criticizing Fico. (Comment. This would obviously serve SDKU's strategy of isolating Fico -- we'll stick to tough private messages for now. End comment.) In response to a question from the Ambassador, Dzurinda acknowledged that the average Slovak does not care much about Fico's pro-Russia tilt. Dzurinda intends to go to Russia to meet with "Other Russia" leader Gary Kasparov and former PM Mikhail Kasyanov.

THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE

¶4. (C) Dzurinda spoke privately with Meciar for over an hour after the debate. According to Dzurinda, Meciar was concerned by rumors that SDKU is prepared to go into coalition with Fico. Dzurinda told Meciar there were things that were possible and things that were crazy -- and going with Fico was crazy. Relieved, Meciar said he wanted to push Fico more, but was wary of Dzurinda defecting to Fico. Dzurinda said he told Meciar to push all he wanted -- the more the better -- and drive Fico crazy.

¶5. (C) Dzurinda noted that while SNS Chairman Jan Slota continues to play the "let's get rich" game, Meciar has all the money he wants and is not personally playing that game

within the new government. What Meciar really craves is western acceptance, which he will never get with Fico and Slota. Dzurinda approved of Post's policy of not meeting with Meciar or Slota, noting that once we did, a certain level of acceptance would occur.

¶16. (C) Dzurinda noted that Slota's arrogance has made him sloppy and said SDKU is watching like a hawk for signs of corruption. Dzurinda suggested Fico too may be engaging in corrupt activities. He mentioned Mr. Kino, a former HzDS privatizer and now Smer sponsor, who told Dzurinda that he had paid to fix up Fico's personal chalet. In addition, Dzurinda claims Fico is known to ask his sponsors, after a few drinks, "how come you are rich and I am not." (Comment. Separately, HzDS Deputy Chairman Milan Urbani told the Ambassador that all funds flow through Smer, which takes a cut of everything. End comment.)

¶17. (C) Dzurinda said he will not be able to gauge the Christian Democratic Movement's (KDH's) willingness to work with Meciar (and SDKU and the ethnic Hungarian SMK) until after the June KDH convention. Anyway, as long as Fico is still popular, Meciar doesn't see any alternate coalition as a viable option. Further, with Meciar playing spoiler on some of Fico's initiatives (i.e., the new labor code, single payer health insurance), Dzurinda believes he can preserve the bulk of his reforms without having to prematurely bring down Fico's government. Dzurinda believes current KDH Chairman Hrusovsky has a 5/4 chance of winning his party's leadership contest. Dzurinda believes that HzDS Deputy Chairman Veteska was encouraged to run against Meciar by Fico, and that a Veteska victory would solidify the party's connection to Smer. But Dzurinda has no doubt Meciar will crush him, and Veteska's political career is over. (See

BRATISLAVA 00000306 002 OF 002

reftel on HzDS leadership contest.)

¶18. (C) Ambassador raised concerns about the treatment of Hedviga Malinova, an ethnic Hungarian student who has now been formally charged with filing a false report to police in connection with an ethnically-motivated attack last August. Becoming very animated, Dzurinda said three separate times, "Be very careful with this." Dzurinda noted that right after the attack he had, unknown to Fico, a private meeting with Police Chief Packa, and the Chief was unswerving in his conviction that Hedviga was lying. "Listen, I have every motivation to attack the government if this is true, but we are very unsure. We must wait for the trial and the facts." VALLEE